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Demant, Jakob ; Landolt, Sara

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# Youth Drinking in Public Places: The Production of Drinking Spaces in and Outside Nightlife Areas

Jakob Demant and Sara Landolt

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## Abstract

This article explores youth drinking in Zurich, Switzerland, on both public squares away from nightlife areas, referred to as ‘square street drinking’ and on the street within the vicinity of nightclubs, defined as ‘club street drinking’. Taking a relational space approach, the analysis adds a social perspective to the dominant economic-political perspective to drinking in urban nightlife zones. The results suggest that the normative landscapes of drinking are constructed differently: the same regulation by police and social workers works differently between the two areas both in terms of inclusion and exclusion as well as in terms of how the material and social dimensions interact. Production and regulation are dependent on how young people participate in these processes. This finding suggests that it would be fruitful to develop a regulation approach on drinking in the post-industrial city that is sensitive to young people as co-producers of space.

Youth drinking in urban public spaces is a contested subject in public and political debates. Increased drinking-related disorders and policing costs are central to the debates concerning the nightlife areas of cities (Measham and Brain, 2005). Research mainly focuses on the transformation of British city centres into recreational spaces which is accompanied by an increase and diversification of drinking establishments

and the emergence of liminal drinking spaces of hedonism and disorder (for example, Chatterton and Hollands, 2003; Crawford, 2009; Dixon *et al.*, 2006; Hadfield *et al.*, 2009; Hayward and Hobbs, 2007; Hobbs *et al.*, 2005; Measham and Brain, 2005; Roberts *et al.*, 2006). The research emphasises how drinking is shaped by the specific space of inner-city drinking zones. It considers such areas as the outcome of

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interplay between production (the alcohol industry), supply (drinking establishments) and regulation (government/policy). Nightlife areas are discussed as spaces where contradictory concerns, such as (neo-) liberal interests in 24-hour sites of consumption meet health, safety and security concerns (see Hadfield *et al.*, 2009).

This paper analyses youth drinking in urban public spaces in Zurich, Switzerland. One aspect of the study focuses on youth drinking in areas, with a high density of clubs and pubs. In these nightlife areas, we focus on youth drinking on the streets. We define this practice as 'club street drinking'. A second aspect we focus on is drinking locations in a public area where there are no night-time entertainment venues. We define this as 'square street drinking'. We do so in order to facilitate a comparison of nights out between an area where drinking is an established part of night-space production and an area where hanging out and drinking on the streets is more 'out of place'. Alcohol is a semi-legal substance that changes its status depending on how the space is temporarily stabilised. Drinking locations are not just stable stages on which things happen, but are venues of space production and events dealing with (hi)stories of places, power relations and norms (Jayne *et al.*, 2008b). Hence, it is not the aim of this analysis to conceptualise and compare different drinking locations as static pre-given spaces in which people are passively embedded. Rather, this article follows a relational space approach, where space is seen as an on-going process constituted of temporary encounters of people and things. Such a relational approach to space is particularly relevant to understand the contested nature of street drinking because it can emphasise how drinking practice is part of the production of space. Hence, this approach can enable us to rethink processes of inclusion and exclusion in a context of contradictory concerns.

## Urban Drinking Spaces

Most of the research on locations of drinking is grounded in ethnographic or other qualitative methodological perspectives on drinking (see Jayne *et al.*, 2008a, 2008b, 2010). Therefore, micro interactive sociological concepts of social settings (drinking situations) are often applied to this type of research (Demant and Järvinen, 2006; Douglas, 2003; Gusfield, 2003; Törrönen and Maunu, 2007a, 2007b). Some studies examine in-depth specific drinking locations such as pubs (for example, Hunt and Satterlee, 1986; Leyshon, 2008), house parties (for example, Järvinen and Østergaard, 2009; Demant and Østergaard, 2007) and tourist locations (for example, Tutenges, 2011). In other studies, mainly in quantitative alcohol research, the venues of drinking were examined as variables in relation to socio-demographic variables, drinking locations and drinking patterns (for example, Clapp *et al.*, 2006; Treno *et al.*, 2000). Presenting data from the US, Treno *et al.* (2000) show that most underage drinkers drink at the homes of others and at parties, whereas older drinkers more often drink in restaurants and bars. Research on alcohol-related crimes in urban areas is another field of alcohol research that focuses on locations of drinking as a spatial variable. Bromley and Nelson (2002) mapped spatial and temporal patterns of alcohol-related crimes in urban areas and showed that alcohol-related violence and harassment were most frequent in nightlife areas and in spaces that act as routes to these areas.

Research on urban drinking spaces focuses mainly on nightlife areas and describes cities at night as contested spaces characterised by a number of contradictions such as (re)regulation and deregulation (see Ferrell *et al.*, 2008; Hadfield *et al.*, 2009; Hayward and Hobbs, 2007), atmospheres of pleasure, freedom and

excitement, and scenes of violence (see Winlow and Hall, 2006). These studies are critical of the British government for indiscriminately liberalising the availability of alcohol with the avowed interest of economic development and for policing and regulatory measures in managing disorder and problems emerging from increased public drunkenness. In this context, Crawford and Flint observe how

night-time public spaces remain contested arenas with radically different meanings for night-consumers, leisure businesses, police, public health agencies, local residents, night workers, voluntary agencies and local government (Crawford and Flint, 2009, p. 407).

The different meanings attributed to drinking spaces are related to complex relations of inclusion and exclusion. According to the distribution of social and economic capital, not all consumers are welcome in licensed premises. For example, people who are too young, those who are 'wrongly' dressed, or people with a certain behaviour that does not fit into the location, are denied access (for example, Chatterton and Hollands, 2003; Hadfield *et al.*, 2009; Landolt and Backhaus, 2009). Also, drinking style can be a factor for fitting into the commercial nightlife scene. Measham and Brain (2005) emphasise that to be accepted in the nightlife scene, a hedonistic drinking style is required. People whose drinking style is similar to that of the working class are considered flawed consumers. This research describes how some drinking practices and some drinkers are integrated into regulated and controlled commercial drinking landscapes in urban areas, and how others are not.

## Relational Space

A relational approach to space considers space "as the product of power-filled social

relations" (Massey, 1999, p. 21) and not solely as a 'stage' on which these relations are enacted. Therefore, the production of space, and consequently space itself, is an on-going process that is dynamic and 'alive', always provisional and changing, never finished and closed, as it comprises relations between multiple entities (see for example, Massey, 2005). Named places, such as the sites under research in this study, are part of producing space. The central meaning of place is the "throwntogetherness" that makes it unavoidable to negotiate "here-and-now" when the human and non-human intersect. This negotiation is termed the "event of place" (Massey, 2005, p. 140). The places are "the coming together of the previously unrelated, a constellation of processes rather than a thing" (p. 141). In other words, particular named places are permanencies that are only ever provisionally stabilised (Anderson, 2008, p. 229). That is, at the same location, the human and the non-human can be part of producing different spaces.

Valentine *et al.* (2008) underline the importance of comparing different spaces and places to understand the relationship between drinking patterns in different spaces. Only a few studies have done so. Measham and Moore (2009), for example, compare different nightclubs and describe not only the differences between the poly-drug profiles of consumers according to distinct local leisure 'scenes', but also emphasise that users in different venues undergo different experiences "in relation to the differential governance and regulation of local leisure scenes" (Measham and Moore, 2009, p. 457). This paper intends to follow the aims of comparing different drinking locations by focusing on the event or 'throwntogethernesses' of the different research sites and to ask how these different events are produced. First, this paper focuses on drinking as a practice that

produces space in interrelation with the specific drinking location, which involves material as well as social dimensions. Secondly, the spaces produced at different drinking locations are compared with how different actors perceive what should be the 'right' use of these locations. Here we also focus on young people's experiences and how these become part of their co-production of the spaces. Thirdly, the arrangements of formal and informal regulation emerging at different drinking locations are examined in relation to the produced spaces.

Before taking up the analysis, analytical definitions of the two types of street drinking that we propose are given: 'square street drinking' and 'club street drinking'. Square street drinking is performed in areas without night-time establishments such as clubs and pubs. However, these spaces are not *per se* non-commercial spaces as there can be shops selling alcohol. In Zurich, this form of street drinking takes place mostly in urban squares located away from the city centre, in residential neighbourhood streets or in parks within the town. On the other hand, club street drinking is performed in areas with a high density of night-time entertainment venues such as nightclubs, bars and pubs, although not inside these spaces. Both types of spaces are marginal spaces (Valentine *et al.*, 2010) in the way that they are not being produced within the establishments in the nightlife areas (as would be the case with club spaces, for example, see Hutton, 2006). However, square street drinking and club street drinking are not marginal in terms of the meanings of, for example, queer space (Latham, 2003) or spaces constructed and used by socially excluded persons. Also, the spaces are not 'loose spaces' (Lugosi *et al.*, 2010) that are not included actively in the cityscape. Hence, the concept of marginal or loose space is not applied here. Square

street drinking and club street drinking refer as such to the venue of social drinking that takes place and forms specific spaces.

## Cases and Structural Context

This paper addresses young people's drinking behaviours in Zurich, Switzerland. The data are split into three parts. The first part consists of 11 focus group interviews and three duo-interviews with 15- to 19-year-old men and women. These interviews were conducted mostly in same-gender groups. The groups were sampled according to a theoretical sampling strategy (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) that considers social structures such as gender, class and national background, as well as the drinking practices of young people. The second part consists of 45 expert interviews with actors of city government and officials, such as police or social workers, as well as residents. The third part consists of participatory observation, including accompanying social workers who control young people's use of public spaces at night. All the data were collected between 2007 and 2009 by one of the authors. Most of the interviews were conducted on the streets. All names of locations and persons relating to the data collected have been anonymised.

Zurich has been in a period of reurbanisation since the end of 1990s when population numbers started to increase. Newcomers tend to be characterised by a higher socioeconomic status as compared with the general population of Zurich (Heye, 2007). A 24-hour society began to emerge at the same time as this population influx as a consequence of the liberalisation of hotel and restaurant licensing laws,<sup>1</sup> the extension of shopping hours and the introduction of continual public transport throughout the night. Eating and drinking establishments in Zurich have been increasing in number



since 1998 and include mainly night cafes (businesses with extended opening hours) with alcohol licences (Statistik Stadt Zürich, 2004, pp. 1–2; Statistik Stadt Zürich, 2010, pp. 242, 599). Such transformations can be seen in many cities of Europe such as in Copenhagen (Roberts *et al.*, 2006) and in Spain (Rodriguez Basanta, 2009), and some cities in Britain (for example, Hadfield and Measham, 2009; Jayne *et al.*, 2008c). Yet, unlike in Britain, where the so-called 24-hour society led to new bans and rules on antisocial behaviour, no particular law was enacted against antisocial behaviour in Zurich. The policy in Zurich rather supports co-existence among different users in public spaces (Stadt Zürich, Soziale Einrichtungen und Betriebe, 2007). However, proposals for introducing laws against antisocial behaviour, such as littering<sup>2</sup> or public drunkenness, introducing curfews and banning of youths congregating at specified locations in some communities of Switzerland were under consideration. Curfews are already in force for people younger than 16 years in some communities of Switzerland.<sup>3</sup> However, the first community in canton Zurich that implemented a curfew had to withdraw it. The curfews provoked opposition and the cantonal-level court ruled that they were against the freedom of assembly, guaranteed by Article 22 of the federal constitution.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, the practice of implementing curfews was discontinued in the canton of Zurich.

The ban on drinking in public spaces differs from place to place depending on the local law. Some cantons have bans whereas the canton of Zurich has no such ban (BAG, 2011).<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the law regulating underage drinking does not prohibit *drinking*, but instead prohibits the sale of beer or wine to people younger than 16 years and the sale of spirits to people younger than 18 years.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, underage drinking is not criminalised. Only

those who sell or give alcohol to young people are targeted by law. The Swiss youth are ranked in the middle of the ESPAD (European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs) countries when it comes to binge drinking (Hibell *et al.*, 2009); they do not practise intense binge drinking as, for example, in England or Denmark (Room, 2007). However, over the past 20 years, there has been a tendency for young people to get drunk more frequently (Schmidt *et al.*, 2008, p. 20). This prompted both prevention and public health experts, as well as some politicians, to request the implementation of new regulations. Besides enforcing the law against giving alcohol to minors, a unit of social workers (termed SIP—security, intervention and prevention) was employed to mediate conflicts and to promote considerate and tolerant behaviour in public spaces. This SIP unit specifically targets young people in public spaces. The unit combines social visits and the aim to keep order, but they have limited powers in comparison with the police: the SIP workers cannot arrest individuals or ask them for their ID, for example; they can only advise individuals on their behaviour (Landolt, 2010; Stadt Zürich, Soziale Einrichtungen und Betriebe, 2007). In general, there was no increase in criminalisation of young people's drinking in public spaces, but there was an increase in the control and regulation as well as in criminalising some activities in public spaces—for example, skateboarding (Müller, 2008).

## Square Street Drinking

Katzenplatz is a square in a middle-class neighbourhood of Zurich located away from the city nightlife zones. It did not become a drinking space fortuitously, but out of the 'throwntogetherness' of disparate factors, such as proximity to home,

availability of alcohol, informal social networks and regulation. While walking across the square on a Friday or Saturday evening, one usually encounters teenagers who stop for a moment or two for changing public transport on their way to an evening out, meeting others, frolicking or buying drinks. Some teenagers stay in the square, drink a beer or an energy drink mixed with alcohol. Some spend only the beginning of the evening in the square, while others 'hang out' the whole evening. Those who hang out and drink at Katzenplatz are mainly young men with diverse socioeconomical and educational backgrounds. Their school levels and nationalities are also diverse.<sup>7</sup> The mix of what the boys refer to as 'nationalities' are attractive to them: Simon, 18, explains that

A neighbourhood should be proud that all of the young people with different nationalities really mix, ... they hang out together and talk ... And really, it's a sign of integration.

The young boys 'hang out' together almost every Friday and Saturday evening in a corner of the square that is slightly hidden from direct view. These boys perceive drinking in this square as a part of meeting friends and gossiping

*Simon* (18): ... Our hangout used to be square X and Y. That's what I'm saying. Then our group grew. There were people from neighbourhood A, from neighbourhood B and from neighbourhood C, you see. If you look at these neighbourhoods, the 'Pronto' [a small grocery, selling alcohol] is in the middle. That's why we started meeting here.

The square, according to them, is well suited for several reasons. First, it is centrally located to where they live. Secondly, one particular shop at Katzenplatz sells alcohol until 11pm (which is late for Zurich) and at cheaper rates than elsewhere (at the main train station, for

example, alcohol is sold only up to 10pm and is more expensive). Further, the main station is more crowded

*Claudio* (17): At the main station everybody is there. ... But here at Katzenplatz it's more intimate; it's a little like our own, it's a bit private and so on. Here we know one another.

*Miguel* (17): Not everyone can see us if we drink here ... Like my sister on her way home, she walks across the square, too. But in this corner here, she can't see me when she comes from the tram.

This is important as some of the boys do not want their parents to know how much they drink when they meet on Friday and Saturday evenings. Valentine *et al.* (2010) show similar processes at play in the use of public spaces within the nightlife areas frequented by members of British Muslim communities. Some Muslims prefer to drink in informal spaces (also termed 'marginal spaces'), such as bus shelters or parks, because these spaces, unlike the spaces in the nightlife areas and hospitality spaces, are outside the control of the Muslim community (Valentine *et al.*, 2010).

The square's location in the urban geometry, availability of alcohol, privacy and intimacy of the place, and mutual relation of elements contribute to the production of a comfortable drinking space for the group. However, 'comfortable youth drinking space' is not the only possible event of a place, which can be a part of Katzenplatz. Katzenplatz can also be a part of the space of interruption. When youth drinking is interrupted by police controls and patrolling social workers, the space is transformed

*Claudio* (17): I don't know what this is good for. They [the social workers of the SIP unit] come here, talk nonsense and so on. And in the end, no one is any the wiser. They don't



do it with adults. Why? To us, they say don't drink too much, its not good for you, bla bla bla. Adults also drink alcohol. Why don't they [the SIP social workers] talk with them?

*Miguel (17):* It's humiliating. The police frisk us as if we were criminals.

*Besnik (17):* It's a public space; we are allowed to be here. I mean, they can't send us away.

The boys argue that the square is a public place and therefore everybody should be allowed there. They also complain that only the young people are frisked by police and social workers. While being frisked, the boys feel that the square is mainly a place where they are not only unwelcome, but also seen as disorderly objects that need to be removed. All this keeps happening, although the official policy of the city government is a paradigm of co-existence among all those using different public spaces (Stadt Zürich, 2007).

The boys explain that using this square for drinking is in conflict with other uses of the square and therefore the police are often called. In the interviews, the young people who use the square, the residents and the city government officials mentioned that the young people cause noise and littering (including broken glass).<sup>8</sup> The boys look at this complaint in the context of the residents' expectation of a quiet atmosphere. Some policemen also share this opinion. A policeman who is a part of the working group composed of social workers, residents and tradesmen located close to Katzenplatz explains

Yes, these young people like to provoke but that shouldn't be overdramatised. It's a phase; they'll grow out of it and it'll be solved. It's part of it; teenagers need space. And testing boundaries, checking how far they can go; for some residents that's too much. But I wouldn't consider this problem to be

anything special. If I compare Katzenplatz with other places in the city, I'd say it's about the same.

The young people argue that the residents must get used to their 'new' kind of use and that the rules and social norms regarding 'appropriate' use of the square need to be negotiated. An 18-year-old boy argues that

They want to have their neighbourhood quiet. But they have to get used to it. We will not go away. It is *our* place as well.

The young people also consider the somewhat declining policing over time as a sort of support for their argument. These boys feel partly successful in the production of Katzenplatz as their drinking space, although they are frustrated at the moments when it turned into a space of interruption.

These very different productions of street drinking spaces seem particularly related to the contested character of urban public spaces and the social groupings in these spaces. One of the social workers of the SIP unit describes a further dimension of space production in public space—namely, that different young people and different sub-cultures meet at different locations. Their cultural practices are part of producing different spaces

Around Neuhof [a neighbourhood located away from the nightlife areas], we have stories other than those around Katzenplatz. At Neuhof, we have additional problems with youth violence. It's another population of young people meeting there. Hardcore soccer fans meet at Neuhof ... At Arts-Park [a park located in the city centre], we have emos at the moment. Not a lot of *other* young people. They move separately from the emos. Sometimes they provoke the emos, but ... it's their own sub-culture that others don't want to be associated with.

The segregation in nightlife outside the nightlife areas is connected with certain locations and with particular groups of young people. The young people construct the places and also position themselves in the landscape of youth culture by different styles of drinking. These lines of differences are limited not only to choosing the places to drink but also to constructing the spaces.

## Club Street Drinking

The nightlife area under discussion spreads out from the main railway station and covers the area up to Zurich West. Most of it was formerly an industrial area but is now a gentrified neighbourhood (Heye, 2007) and one of Zurich's most vibrant nightlife areas. The decline of industry was followed by mixed use of residence, commerce and industry, service and culture, and restaurants (Stadt Zürich, 2010). The night-time entertainment economy here is formed not only by venues where, through promotional strategies, you are encouraged to drink (nightclubs and bars) but also by a big cinema complex, galleries and performing arts centres. In this area, one can also find a number of Zurich's theatres. Experts in the field of youth and nightlife describe part of the area as the 'youth club of half of Switzerland' because this night-time area is frequented by young people from all areas of the German-speaking part of Switzerland.

Night-clubbers and pub-goers spill out onto the streets in nightlife areas in most cities, including Zurich. The phenomenon of young people drinking in front of club spaces in Zurich's nightlife areas is as much because of the prices of alcoholic drinks and club rules. As alcoholic drinks are much cheaper in shops than in nightclubs, young people often buy alcohol in off-licences or supermarkets for the night out before visiting clubs. One of them describes this practice<sup>9</sup>

Normally we drink on the train to town. We have fun, talk. Here the night out begins. At the main train station we buy once again—fresh supplies. We drink before we enter the club. The rest we stash outside. We are not allowed to carry our own to the club. They check that. Some women fix Feiglingle (small bottles of spirit) onto their legs: they don't check under their skirts.

They not only buy alcohol to drink before visiting clubs (pre-drinking), they even stock it up for the whole night out. During the night, they frequently go in and out of the club to drink the less expensive alcohol hidden outside. In this case, the street is not initially a chosen location. However, it is a location which is rather frequently visited by alcohol-drinking youths, Anna explains

You don't leave the club just for a fast drink in front of the club; you go out and back again, because it's also a party out there.

The club spaces expanded onto the streets of the city and, as a result, the private-public dimension somehow dissolves. On the one hand, the party goes on in the street and, on the other, the street is compared with more private or inconspicuous spaces such as the toilets. However, in Zurich, the areas around nightclubs are rather more controlled. Social workers often patrol and conduct alcohol and drug prevention work, as well as on-site drug checking in front of clubs. Hence, the club street space does not have the backstage ontology of drinking in a scarcely frequented park with less control or drinking at house parties (for example, Demant and Østergaard, 2007).

Based on the location of the clubs in the urban geometry, this kind of 'club street drinking' provokes the residents to complain of noise pollution and littering, similar to the complaints described in the case of 'square street drinking' at Katzenplatz.

That is one reason why the SIP unit is active in Zurich's nightlife areas. Furthermore, the social workers talk with young people and undertake prevention work *in situ* as one of their main tasks. These practices are described as strategies in order to turn anonymous drinking situations into familiar spaces

We want to give young people with risky drinking behaviour a feeling of: "hey, you're not moving in a totally anonymous environment, we see you as individuals and we address you as individuals". ... We signal that Zurich is also a village. "We know you". ... Legally speaking, many of those we're addressing haven't done anything wrong. There's nothing to accuse them of. They're just moving in a high-risk environment. For example, the one I addressed had bought 16 cans of beer. That's eight litres. "You gotta be kidding me", I said. It turned into a fruitful discussion. In cases like this, the parents are supposed to react. But sometimes they don't care. Then we react and take their drinking practices seriously, instead of ignoring it. ... The young people are well educated in prevention. What we do is in the situation when they drink, at the train station or around the clubs; that's where we address them. Really engaging with the substances at the moment of consuming. ... Sometimes they're glad we talk to them (Head of the SIP unit).

The description of the social work of the SIP unit is in line with the general position of the city government that young people should present themselves in public space in their own style. This means that conflicts of interests have to be solved within the framework of the civic policy as a process of negotiation (Stadt Zürich, 2006, p. 20). Although the SIP unit is criticised as being a hybrid of social work and security, the city government, police and social workers, particularly those who work with the SIP unit in

projects, highlight it mainly as a permissive way of managing conflicts in public spaces. The harm reduction strategy conducted by the SIP unit and the Zurich City government for alcohol consumption by the youth is based on Zurich's experiences in drug harm reduction.<sup>10</sup> The strategy can be termed—in line with Jayne *et al.* (2010)—progressive, as it not only focuses on drunken, violent and out-of-control nightlife areas, but also accounts for the pleasurable nights out with alcohol. The Zurich harm reduction and prevention policy balances such perspectives because notwithstanding its acceptance of drinking as a 'normal' practice among the youth when they go out to have fun, it warns them against excessive drinking. Furthermore, it targets problems such as increasing violence and loss of control that are associated with alcohol use.

The visible presence of social workers in the nightlife area of Zurich makes club street drinking more controlled as compared with square street drinking. What is interesting is that the young people construct different subject positions for street drinking at locations separate from nightlife areas as compared with 'club-street drinking'. As shown in the case of Katzenplatz, police controls and interactions with social workers result in a "throwntogetherness" that includes constructions of a relatively powerless position for the young drinkers (space of interruption). They perceive themselves as objects that have to be removed (their drinking is out of place; for example, Cresswell 1996). On the other hand, the club street drinkers do not feel 'out of place' because they perceive that they created the control and interaction with the social workers

*Interviewer:* What do you think about SIP? Are they annoying?

*Jan:* We don't have any trouble with the 'sipsis'.

*Lea:* They are OK. Just have a talk with them.

*Pascal:* Sometimes it's bothersome. Like parents. Don't drink too much. Stuff like that.

*Jan:* It's not too bad. They are just around here. There are so many party-goers here, so they are also here.

Informal qualitative interviews with club street drinkers and participatory observations indicate that club street drinkers perceive control functions as normal practices at nightlife areas. They perceive that the location itself (in front of clubs), being in a nightlife area, causes the controls. Controls are perceived as part of the place and not as an instrument for displacing them. Hence, club street drinkers see these interactions as a practice that affirms the location as a place of nightlife. As they experience themselves as participants in this nightlife, they also experience themselves to be expected to be at these locations. This makes street drinking an appropriate use of the place and the regulation initiatives more acceptable. A few of the entities that co-produce different drinking spaces in Zurich's public space are the politics of alcohol pricing, national and cantonal laws that shape the availability of alcohol in shops and clubs, the decision of the Zurich City government to create the SIP unit and the young people's perception of controls by the SIP unit.

## Discussion

Drinking in public urban areas is highly contested. This paper includes these negotiations in the description of the normative landscapes of the urban areas and, more specifically, the nightscapes. Police and social workers and, consequently, urban policy, become part of the 'event of place'. These policies (as well as other entities) are

all part of the processes that constitute the places at the same time as they rise above them (Anderson, 2008). However, the paper highlights that we need to include how the drinking practices by young people produce diverse spaces. Hence, this paper argues in line with Jayne *et al.* (2008a) that it is relevant to include these aspects for understanding the practice of urban drinking and its relations with conflicts, crime and regulation.

Square street drinking provides a case study of how contested events of places can be. The merging and mixing of diverse expectations, uses, and 'interpretations' of the square are at odds with each other. The results from this study are similar to those of Kraack and Kenway (2002) on young people's drinking experiences on beaches in Australia. The traces of young people spending the night at the beach drinking (such as empty and broken bottles, as well as the late night noise) are at odds with residents' picture of a clean and quiet neighbourhood. Dixon *et al.* (2006), for example, show that the ban on street drinking in British cities is supported by such an argument. However, the present results show that young drinkers in urban squares away from the nightlife areas use the very same argument in support of their claim that they *also* have the right to be present (and drink) in public spaces. Even in comparison with the nightlife areas, these contested public spaces are open in commercial terms (Robinson, 2009) and less controlled than the nightlife areas. Some public places are perceived by the youth as spaces of control and regulation, which make the young people drinking there feel displaced. From a regulation perspective, this strategy could be seen as a partly successful situational crime prevention strategy (see Clarke, 1983). The young street drinkers react, however, in somewhat the same way as Valentine *et al.* (2010) show is the case with young Muslims' reactions to the

informal regulation by their families: they produce a private space in the city—closed off from public gaze—in terms of a “most possible autonomy over actions space” (Robinson, 2009, p. 504). Alcohol is very much part of making such spatial areas a ‘semi-private youth space’. The consequences of this event of place are that the youth are ‘displaced’ (or displace themselves) into more hidden areas where alcohol becomes even more important for the production of space. From the specific perspective of alcohol prevention, this process could make alcohol a more significant part of young people’s self-identity.

The discussions relating to urban binge-drinking zones (Hayward and Hobbs, 2007; Measham and Brain, 2005) are interesting to review in the light of this negotiated space between square street drinking and club street drinking. First, it became obvious that the public spaces in front of the nightclubs were even *more* regulated by police and social workers than were those of Katzenplatz. However, the club street drinkers did not feel as unwelcome as the street drinkers in the square. The sites in front of clubs transformed from unaccepted spaces for drinking into more accepted ones. This is not merely due to the proximity to the club—the expansion of the nightclub into the streets—but also due to the way the club street drinkers actually drink. They form a party that has close similarities with the designated drinking space of the nightclub. The young club street drinkers interpret regulations depending on the place of drinking and, in this way, attribute it the status (for them) of a socially accepted space for drinking. They are situated in a consumer economy (the night-time economy; see Hayward and Hobbs, 2007) without consuming expensive drinks in clubs. However, they are able to produce identities as active participants in the consumer society (for example, Jayne *et al.*, 2006).

As has been widely claimed in much research on nightlife areas, the

dominant forms of control are now essentially pragmatic systems of restraint that are manifested as market-oriented protocols featuring a multiplicity of sensual enticements, and cultivating an ethic of ‘aggressive hedonism’ (Hobbs *et al.*, 2003, p. 30).

However, we find that it is not as much the economic regulation perspective that forms the difference in making drinking in place or how the controls of police and social workers are perceived. On the one hand, proactive street regulation is perceived as control in a space of interruption, whereas the proximity of nightclubs and bars, on the other hand, makes the street a different space. Drinking is neither out of place, as in Katzenplatz, nor in place as within the nightclub. Although somewhat provocative, it could be argued that the proactive street regulation is transformed; the gatekeepers of the streets in the Zurich nightlife areas are not only the police and social workers, but also the youth. This makes it a more open space where the answer of *what* is established is not given.

It is relevant to contextualise the findings from this analysis within the ongoing discussion of the distinction between a Mediterranean controlled drinking culture and a northern (Scandinavian/British) drinking culture (Room, 2007). Within Britain especially, there has been a promotion of a change in drinking styles by facilitating an urban renaissance (Jayne *et al.*, 2008c) that should result in more ‘liveable cities’. An introduction of 24-hour entertainment opportunities in combination with a zero tolerance towards antisocial behaviour should ensure the changes from British-style binge drinking towards a more relaxed—and Mediterranean—drinking style (Jayne *et al.*, 2008c). British strategies



of urban renaissance have focused on promotion of nightlife zones within the cities; 'drinkatainment' has in various degrees, together with theatres and restaurants, been the pivotal point of this development. This strategy is very close to the Zurich case where we also find a mix of restaurants, theatres and nightclubs within a specific area of the city. The primary difference between the British and Swiss forms can be found within the regulation regimes. Britain has applied a close to zero tolerance towards disorder, whereas the Zurich case can be described as lenient in relation to this. The increased management and control within the British context have to some degree excluded 'undesirable' social groups; those that could participate within the new urban strategy have been the ones with the ability to consume. The less confrontational position of the Zurich government and its practice of applying *in situ* social work have made it possible for 'non-profitable' young people to be integrated into the nightlife zones in front of clubs. This strategy promotes integration of people with identities and lifestyles that are not just in the area in terms of consuming in the 'drinkatainment' (Jayne *et al.*, 2008c) business. The more relaxed—and Mediterranean—drinking style may have been accomplished here because the young club street drinkers feel part of the place (in opposition to the square street drinkers). It is important to acknowledge that the Swiss findings may not apply directly to a British context. Even though the distinction between the 'controlled' southern and 'intoxication-focused' northern drinking styles is getting more and more blurred (Room, 2007; Mäkelä *et al.*, 2006), it is relevant to point to the fact that, where Swiss youth have close to a European mean figure of, for example, being 'drunk last month', British youth are among the highest (Hibell *et al.*, 2009).

The findings of this study would require further research to be more conclusive. However, this paper highlights how production and regulation of the nightscape are very much dependent on the roles that young people play in co-producing these spaces. Within this analysis, it is found that it might be fruitful to develop the regulation approach on urban drinking spaces that is sensitive to young people as co-constructors of space.

## Notes

1. LS 935.11, 1996, Gastgewerbegesetz ([www.zhlex.zh.ch/Erlass.html?Open&Ordnr=935.11](http://www.zhlex.zh.ch/Erlass.html?Open&Ordnr=935.11); accessed 10 June 2011).
2. The 26 federated states constituting the federal republic of Switzerland are called cantons. In Switzerland, most laws are enacted at the federated state (canton) level, whereas some are enacted at the community level (there are 2495 political communities in Switzerland (BfS, 2012)). In some cantons, a ban on littering exists. A violation of the ban can incur a monetary fine. In the canton of Zurich, littering is not a target for the cantonal law of waste but can be a target for the communal police regulations (RRB Nr. 393, 2009, Polizeiverordnung. Erhebung von Ordnungsbussen (Littering) ([www.ZHentscheide.zh.ch](http://www.ZHentscheide.zh.ch); accessed 18 May 2011)).
3. Attempts by some cantons to implement such laws at the cantonal level were all defeated in the particular cantonal parliament (Neue Züricher Zeitung, 2009).
4. VB.2009.00055 Ansammlungsverbot für schulpflichtige Jugendliche ab 22.00 Uhr. Verwaltungsgericht des Kantons Zürich 3. Abteilung ([www.vgrzh.ch/rechtsprechung/](http://www.vgrzh.ch/rechtsprechung/); accessed 10 June 2011).
5. One exception exists. Pupils are not allowed to drink alcohol on school grounds during school hours, including the lunch break (VSV 412.101, 2006, Volksschulverordnung vom 28.6.2006, § 54.2 a ([www.zh.ch/internet/de/rechtliche\\_grundlagen/gesetze.html](http://www.zh.ch/internet/de/rechtliche_grundlagen/gesetze.html); accessed 10 June 2011)).



6. SR 817.02, 2005 *Lebensmittel—und Gebrauchsggegenständeverordnung* ([www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/c817\\_02.html](http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/c817_02.html); accessed 10 June 2011).
7. A survey conducted by a social worker shows that the young (mainly males) who hang out at Katzenplatz belong to a wide range of nationalities (including Swiss) and have different educational backgrounds (most of them undertaking vocational training). Some of them live in the Katzenplatz neighbourhood, others in close-by neighbourhoods of Zurich and a few others in close-by communities (Stadt Zürich, Sozialdepartement, 2008; expert interviews with the social worker who conducted the survey).
8. An unpublished report from the administration of Zurich concerning the situation and challenges at Katzenplatz stated that reducing young people's use of alcohol is an aim of the interventions at Katzenplatz (Stadt Zürich, Sozialdepartement, 2008, p. 4). A section about failure of the interventions so far also stated that an effective change in young people's drinking practices is in question (p. 6). The conflict of interests at Katzenplatz at nights over the weekend and the different perceptions of this conflict (including different views from different neighbours, city officials and social workers) are discussed in Landolt (2010).
9. The quotes of this empirical part were collected while making some observations in a nightlife area and while making participative observations accompanying a SIP social worker at work. That is why there is no information about the particulars of persons, such as their age.
10. The SIP project, which started in 2001, is based on a policy of four pillars—prevention, repression, loss minimisation and drug addiction treatment. The general aim is to reduce drug consumption and addiction (Stadt Zürich, Soziale Einrichtungen und Betriebe, 2007).

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